



Childcare Needs Assessment

Proposed Large-scale Residential Development at Pat
Scarteen Road, Killowen, (townlands), Kenmare, Co. Kerry.

Client: KPH Construction

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Introduction

1.1 Purpose of Document

This statement has been prepared in support of the proposed development and outlines the schemes rationale regarding provision of childcare facilities.

The proposed development is a residential scheme consisting of 100 units at Pat Scarteen Road, Killowen, (townlands), Kenmare, Co. Kerry. Given that the majority of units (60%) within the scheme will consist of 2 bedrooms or fewer, this assessment determines whether there is a requirement to deliver a childcare facility to meet the needs of the proposed development.

1.2 Housing Mix

The proposed scheme will consist of 100 residential units comprising 40 no. 3 bedroom dwelling houses, and 60 no. own-door maisonette/apartment units (30 no 1 bedroom, 30 no. 2 bedroom). In terms of housing mix, the scheme includes the following:

- 40 no. 3-bedroom units (40%)
- 30 no. 2-bedroom units (30%)
- 30 no. 1-bedroom units (30%)

We anticipate that the 3 bedroom dwellings (40% of total mix) will provide principally for family accommodation needs within the development.

Based on the demographic profile of Kenmare we envisage that the primary market for the proposed maisonette apartments will be retirees and young professionals working in the many employment centres within Kenmare. The Kenmare Municipal District Local Area Plan (2024 – 2030) (LAP) recognises that “*Kenmare’s local economy is largely tourism based*”. It notes that under half (46%) of the jobs in Kenmare are held by workers who commute to Kenmare from other parts of Kerry, while the remainder (5%) are held by workers who commute to Kenmare from outside the county. Tourism of this scale puts pressure on local accommodation; and the absence of local affordable housing leads to unsustainable travel patterns and traffic congestion. The unit mix has been designed to contribute towards addressing this issue.

1.3 Demographic Profile

Table 01 indicates that while the population of the Kenmare Electoral Division has increased by c. 21% between 2011 and 2022, the pre-school age population has experienced a fall of 8% in this period.

State	2011	2016	2022
0-4 year olds	356,329	331,515	295,415
Total Population	4,588,252	4,761,865	5,149,139
% 0-4 Year olds	7.8%	7.0%	5.7%
County Kerry	2011	2016	2022
0-4 year olds	10,025	9,020	8,300
Total Population	145,502	147,707	156,458
% 0-4 Year olds	6.9%	6.1%	5.3%
Kenmare Electoral Division	2011	2016	2022
0-4 year olds	222	197	205
Total Population	2,912	3,127	3,520
% 0-4 Year olds	7.6%	6.3%%	5.8%%

Table 01 - Censuses 2011,2016 and 2022 Figure for Pre-School Cohort (* based on ED as no settlement figure in 2011)

Overall, this cohort now represents just 5.8% of the total population in Kenmare compared to 7.6% in 2011. This decline closely reflects the national and countywide in terms of this pre-school cohort (ref. Table 01).

It was also apparent from the 2022 Census that the average household size in Kerry at 2.57 persons was below the national average of 2.74, with Kenmare Electoral Division being notable low at 2.39 persons per household.

The Kerry County Development Plan (CDP) acknowledges of the ageing population of the County and, with the popularity of Kenmare as a retirement destination specifically referenced in previous Council publications¹.

1.4 Existing Provision

In support of this analysis, we have reviewed identified capacity for each of the 2 childcare facilities in proximity to the proposed development. The Tusla website provides total capacity data for each registered facility which indicates a total capacity of 118 no. childcare places in the nearby facilities in 2024/2025. Based on the snapshot of the attendance in each facility in the latest Tulsa pre-school inspection reports, it can be extrapolated that there is a potential residual; capacity² of 39 childcare spaces proximate to the site. It is acknowledged however, that attendance levels fluctuate

¹ the Kenmare MD LAP 2024-2030 when it stated: 'There are more older people in the age bracket of over 75 living in Kenmare, compared to the county figures indicating its popularity as a place to retire'.

² Potential capacity has been determined by reviewing reported attendance figures for each facility, and by comparing with each facilities identified capacity.

significantly on a day-to-day basis and this assessment of capacity is purely indicative and does not take into account age group, or whether the provision is sessional, part-time or full-time. Notwithstanding the above, this assessment is based on the best available information on existing childcare service capacity.

TUSLA Reference Number	Name	Tusla Capacity	Children In Attendance (Tusla Inspection)	Potential Capacity
TU2015KY067	Little Angels Preschool	44	31	13
TU2015KY015	Bright Sparks Montessori	44	32	12
Nearby Facilities				
TU2015KY066	Little Acorns Kilgarvan	30	16	14
		118	79	39

Table 02 – Existing Childcare Facilities in Kenmare and Vicinity

1.5 Permitted Provision

It should also be noted that on the 11th of March 2026 Kerry County Council granted permission for the construction of 85 no. dwellings and a 246m² pre-school facility (ref. 2560038) at the Parsonage, Bell Height, Kenmare. This decision was appealed by third-parties to An Coimisiún Pleanála (ref PL-51110-KY-26) and on the 15th of July 2026 the Commission upheld the Council's decision. The permitted development makes provision for approx. 70 childcare spaces (depending on the age profile catered for), significantly in excess of the demand generated by the 85 no. proposed units. Therefore, the quantum of available childcare places within Kenmare and its vicinity is set to increase with the delivery of the Ball Heights scheme.

Policy Context

The national Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2001 provide a framework to guide both local authorities in preparing development plans and assessing applications for planning permission, and developers and childcare providers in formulating development proposals.

2.1 Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2001

The national Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities provide a framework to guide both local authorities in preparing development plans and assessing applications for planning permission, and developers and childcare providers in formulating development proposals.

Appendix 2 of the guidelines establishes an indicative standard of one childcare facility per 75 dwellings in new housing areas. One facility providing a minimum of 20 childcare places is considered to be a reasonable starting point in this regard. These guidelines acknowledge that other case-specific assumptions may lead to an increase or decrease in this requirement. The guidelines emphasise that the results of any childcare needs analysis carried out as part of a county childcare strategy should also be considered. Appendix 2 also states that the threshold for provision should be established having regard to the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of areas.

2.2 Circular PL 3/2016

In March 2016, the Government issued a circular in relation to childcare facilities under the early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme. In accordance with the stated aspiration to increase access to childcare nationally, the circular requests that local planning authorities:

“Expedite all pre-planning application consultation requests from childcare facility providers in relation to proposals to extend opening hours, to increase capacity or to provide new facilities.

Expedite, insofar as is possible, consideration of all planning applications or Section 5 declaration submissions in respect of childcare facilities in order to facilitate the expansion of required capacity as appropriate”.

2.3 Universal Design Guidelines 2019

In June 2019, the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs launched the Universal Design Guidelines for Early Learning and Care Settings. These guidelines are an important step in making all Early Learning and Care services accessible to all children. This publication offers guidance on the refurbishment, renovation and building of centres for Early Learning and Care in Ireland. The guidelines apply to both new-build and retrofit projects and provide a flexible Universal Design framework to ensure that settings are accessible, understandable and easy to use for all children, staff, families and visitors.

- The Universal Design ELC setting comprises four quality features;
- Site Location, Approach, Entry and Site Layout
- Entering and Moving about the ELC setting
- Key Internal and External Spaces
- Elements and Systems

2.4 Sustainable Urban Housing Design Standards for New Apartments - Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2025)

We note section 4.7 of the 2025 Apartment Guidelines which states that:

One-bedroom or studio type units should not generally be considered to contribute to a requirement for any on-site childcare provision and subject to the factors above, this may also apply in part or whole, to units with two or more bedrooms

2.5 Kerry County Development Plan 2022 - 2028

We also note the CDP planning policy KCDP 6-2 in terms of childcare which states that it is an objective of the Council to:

'support the provision and distribution of a range of community infrastructure facilities in accordance with the Settlement and Core Strategies to meet the needs of the County's population structure in conjunction with other statutory, voluntary, private sector agencies and community groups'.

4.

Childcare Provision Requirement

Appendix 2 of the Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities establishes a standard that where 75 dwellings are constructed, one childcare facility providing a minimum of 20 childcare places is considered reasonable. On this basis, the need to provide for 40 childcare places would be triggered by reaching a threshold of 150 units, 60 places by a threshold of 225 units, 80 places by a threshold of 300 units etc.

Furthermore Section 4.7 of the 2025 Apartment Guidelines establishes that one bedroom units and to some extent two bedroom units should not generally be considered to contribute to a requirement for any childcare provision.

Of the proposed 100 units the majority (60%) will consist of 2 bedrooms or fewer, which in line with the Guidelines can reasonable be expected to generate limited childcare demand. We consider therefore that proposed development falls below the threshold where the provision of a childcare facility is required.

3.1 Rationale

This assessment has been prepared in accordance with the adopted policies of Kerry County Council and the National Childcare Guidelines. Based on Section 4.7 of the Apartment Guidelines the following assumption has been made:

- The 30 no. 1-bedroom units are all excluded from consideration in relation to generating a childcare requirement.

This childcare assessment, therefore, has assessed the childcare demand based on all of the proposed 40 no. 3-bedroom units and, notwithstanding Section 4.7 of the Apartment Guidelines, a conservative approach is adopted and all 30 no. 2-bedroom units have been included in the assessment. In total this represents 70 no proposed units. Based on Appendix 2 of the Childcare Guidelines this number of units is below the threshold of 75 dwellings that would trigger the requirements for a 20 space childcare facility.

An evaluation of CSO data confirms that Kenmare, in line with national and countywide trends, has experienced a fall in its pre-school population in recent years. A review of public records indicates the presence of a number of childcare facilities that already serve the town of Kenmare, which based on the Tusla Inspector Reports of 2024/2025 appear to have additional capacity. In addition, a further creche in Kenmare was permitted by the Council in March 2026, with the decision being upheld by An Comisiun Pleanála in July 2026. These factors, coupled with the proposed unit mix of 60% 1 or 2 bed units, establish that there is no requirement or justification for the provision of a childcare facility in this scheme.



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Accreditations
ISO 9001:2015
ISO 14001:2015
ISO 45001:2018